



It's Never Too Late

By John O. Cochran, DC

An elderly patient once told me, "I stopped smoking and extended my life expectancy. My wife is furious." We all know the reasons to not smoke, and every one of us knows what it can do to our bodies. Lung cancer, bronchitis, emphysema and chest infections are common, and widely publicized. Lesser known conditions, like laryngeal cancer, oral cancer and peptic ulcers are becoming more common. Finally, consider the granddaddy of all, coronary heart disease (CHD). All of these are attributed to smoking cigarettes.

Let's look at some of the "friendly" components of cigarette smoke, and what they do in the body.

- Carbon Monoxide hinders oxygen transfer within lungs and blood vessels, lowers one's ability to perform physical activity, and accelerates the aging process.
- Nicotine has a profound effect on the central nervous system, creating dependence and resulting in those withdrawal symptoms that make quitting difficult.
- Tar contains the carcinogens that lead to abnormal cell growth (cancer), and is responsible for the cough and sputum experienced by most smokers.

Both nicotine and carbon monoxide have adverse effects on the heart as well, and smokers have a three-fold risk of developing heart disease than do non-smokers. For patients with hypertension, diabetic mellitus or high blood cholesterol, smoking will speed up atherosclerosis and cause coronary heart disease.

Clinical research has shown that on average, smokers' lives are three years shorter than non-smokers. Lung cancer, chronic bronchitis and emphysema are debilitating diseases linked directly to smoking, and each one causes tremendous discomfort and suffering. But is it ever too late to quit?

An article in *JAMA* (The Journal of the American Medical Association) reported research on death rates among elderly who continued to smoke. In a large longitudinal study of people 65-74 years of age, cigarette smokers were found to have a risk of death

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from CHD that was 52% higher than nonsmokers, ex-smokers, or pipe/cigar smokers. Further, this excess risk fell within five years of quitting, even among this age group. It's never too late.

There are many ways to change smoking habits. There are pills, patches, gums and support groups. There are shots, aversion therapy and hypnosis. However, like the old joke about how many psychiatrists it takes to change a light bulb (one, but the light bulb has to really want to change), the same can be said of smoking. It has to be your time and the reasons have to be your own.

Laser Therapy helps people stop smoking, it uses acupuncture/acupressure points on the skin. The cold Laser is absorbed by the skin, which then causes endorphins to be released, eliminating the urge to smoke, boosting metabolism and helping to relieve stress. The Laser eliminates the physical aspects of the addiction so there are no cravings for a cigarette.

Here are some facts about Laser Therapy: most people stop smoking within the prescribed number of treatments, usually four. The treatments last 20 to 30 minutes, and are applied to the ears, hands, wrists, arms and the side of the nose. The method is 100% natural, so there are no side effects, and because it is applied externally, the Laser doesn't interact with medications and poses no health risks.

Have you ever wondered what would happen to your body if you did stop smoking, even if you have smoked for many years? You may think that your body is too damaged for it to matter, so you may be surprised to learn that the minute you stop smoking, your body undergoes changes. Consider these: within twenty minutes after your last puff, your heart rate slows. After you stop for 24 hours, your ability to smell and taste is enhanced.

You'll discover that, as they say, "The biggest shock when you quit smoking is finding out what fast food really tastes like."

For more information on Laser Therapy treatments to stop smoking, call Alternative Health Clinic in Conway 347-5445 or Myrtle Beach 692-9243. See ad page 11.

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